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Probation in the Manhattan Children's

[New York]

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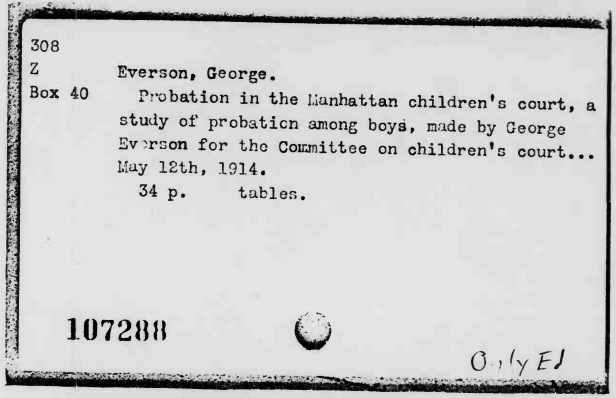

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Probation in The Manhattan Children's Court

A Study of Probation Among Boys, Made By

GEORGE EVERSON
FOR THE COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN'S COURT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL COURTS OF THE CHARITY ORGANIZATION SOCIETY.

May 12th, 1914.

FOREWORD.

The information for this report was obtained from the original records at the probation office; the records selected were those of cases which had been finished and placed in the permanent files. They were taken chronologically, beginning with cases that were placed on probation about the first of August, 1912, and extending through the year to June, 1913. It was necessary to begin as far back as we did, in order to get the large number of finished cases taken chronologically that we desired. In our investigation 1,536 cases were studied. The information for the first part of the report dealing with the probationer was obtained almost exclusively from the investigation blanks, that for the latter part of the report dealing primarily with the work of the officers from the chronological history blanks. Great care has been taken to get an absolutely accurate measure of the facts as they appeared on the records. The information for the report was gathered during the month of December, 1913, from personal study of the records with the assistance of Miss Bowman. The report deals entirely with boy probationers; no study was made of the records of the girls.

MS Jan 27-17

SUMMARY.

The report attempts to get an accurate measure of the type of delinquent placed on probation and to get a true estimate of the work done by the probation officers with their probationers.

The children placed on probation are those who have been found guilty of the more serious delinquencies.

A large percentage of the children placed on probation (37%) had previous court histories.

Most of the children placed on probation were over twelve years of age.

The native born children of foreign parents were the largest nativity group; Hebrews and Italians predominated in this group as well as in the foreign born of foreign parents group.

Seventy-five per cent. of the children were enrolled in regular classes in school; 14% had received their working papers; few children were enrolled in special and ungraded classes.

The percentage of retardation among children on probation is much higher than among normal school children. 57% of the delinquents were retarded.

Nearly 60% of the children on probation were of Catholic faith; about 30% were Hebrews.

Judge Hoyt placed the majority on probation, and Judge Mayo discharged the majority.

A study of residential distribution shows that the majority of the probationers reside in the lower and upper east side. The east side below Fourteenth Street contributing the largest percentage of any one district.

In the majority of the cases not more than three reports were made by the probationers to their officers.

In over 60% of the cases not more than four visits each were made by the officers to the homes of their probationers.

In about half the cases the officers visited the schools or employers of their probationers.

Other meetings with parents and probationers were negligible.

Co-operation was sought from other agencies in about 27% of the cases.

The probation periods are uniformly too short for the right kind of constructive probation work.

The records of the probation office are well kept and of great value.

Practically no supervision is exercised by the chief probation officer of the Court of Special Sessions.

Probation officers are burdened with too much clerical work; the office should be supplied with additional clerical help.

While there are many striking examples of splendid probation work there is much room for improvement in the large majority of the cases, and longer probation periods are necessary to bring about this improvement.

A REPORT ON PROBATION IN THE MANHATTAN CHILDREN'S COURT.

Part I—The Probationers.

SINCE the appointment of paid probation officers in the spring of 1912 by the court and the installation of a careful system of records for the probation department in the summer of the same year, probation has become perhaps the most important department in the Children's Court, and a good beginning has been made toward a proper scientific treatment of delinquent and neglected children. It is the object of this study to put in as short and clear a way as possible the pertinent facts about the probationers and their treatment by the probation officers.

Offenses.

The larger percentage of children who are placed on probation in the Children's Court are those who have committed the more serious offenses. The largest single group are those who have committed offenses against property, that is, those offenses commonly designated as "Petit Larceny," "Grand Larceny," "Unlawful Entry," etc. The next largest group is that of ungovernable and disorderly children who were arraigned in Special Proceedings, and when placed in charge of the probation officer were said to be placed "under supervision" rather than "on probation." This class of offenders are really as serious a problem to deal with as are those who have been convicted of offenses against property. They are often cases where a child has been found in company with thieves, or with goods in his possession for which he can give no account.

These two classes of offenders, together with those who have committed major offenses against the peace (offenses which involve serious moral turpitude), constitute practically 77% of all of the children placed on probation by the court. The probation officers therefore have under their care in most instances children who need very serious attention and careful supervision. It will

be well to bear this in mind in considering the further facts and recommendations brought forward in this report.

The following table gives a popular classification of the offenses for which children were placed in charge of probation officers:

TABLE I.

OFFENSES.

	Number	Per cent
Assault	65	4.3
Offenses against Property	527	34.3
Major offenses against the Peace	173	11.4
Minor offenses against the Peace	250	16.3
Unlawfully employed	24	1.6
Violation Corporation Ordinance, not included above	8	.5
Ungovernable and Disorderly Children	479	31.1
Compulsory Education Law	1	.....
Miscellaneous	7	.5
Total	1534	100.0
Not given	2	
Total	1536	

PREVIOUS RECORDS.

The probation officers' reports on investigations show that a considerable number of the children placed in their care have had previous court experience. Thirty-seven per cent. of the total number have been in the court before. However, only a minor portion of these had more than one previous court record, 25.6% of the total had only one previous record.

The following table gives the number and percentage of children who had previous court records:

TABLE II.

PREVIOUS COURT RECORDS.

	Number	Per cent
One previous record	383	25.6
Two previous records	126	8.4
Three previous records	43	2.8
Four previous records	11	.7
No previous record	935	62.5
Total	1498	100.0
Not stated	38	
Total	1536	

AGES OF CHILDREN.

Seventy-seven per cent of the children whose records were studied were between the ages of twelve and fifteen years inclusive. The probation officers find their most difficult problems with the large group of boys between twelve and fifteen years of age. There is this hopeful side, however, that children at this age are in the formative and most impressionable period of their lives and any strong influence that may be brought to bear on them by the probation officers has an exceptional chance of leaving a permanent impression.

These boys are at the age when the social instinct is awakening and it appears to be a splendid opportunity for the probation officers to co-operate with various social centers, clubs and settlements, in an appeal to this social instinct. This seems to be the easiest road, outside of insisting on good conscientious work at school or for an employer, to be followed in the efforts to make the boys into good and responsible citizens. With boys of this age the personal influence of the probation officer should be a most potent factor in bringing about reform. The ages of children on probation are shown in detail in the following table:

TABLE III.

AGES OF CHILDREN.

	Number	Per cent
7 and under	5	.3
8 years	23	1.5
9 years	56	3.7
10 years	112	7.4
11 years	150	9.8
12 years	246	16.2
13 years	277	18.2
14 years	296	19.5
15 years	349	23.0
16 years	6	.4
Total	1520	100.0
Not stated	16	
Total	1536	

NATIVITY OF PROBATIONERS.

A study of the nativity of the probationers shows that our native born children of foreign born parents are the most serious class with which we have to deal. Fifty-seven per cent. of the whole number studied are of this nativity group. The Italians with 31.5% have the largest representation in this group, with the Jewish children a close second, the children of parents from Russia and Austria and the Balkan Peninsula. The records show that the emigrants from Russia, Austria and the Balkan Peninsula are almost exclusively Hebrew. The third largest group are the native born children of parents born in Ireland, who are represented by 23% of the total.

Slightly more than 27% of all the children whose records were studied were foreign born of foreign parents. The racial distribution in this group is considerably different from that of the one mentioned above. The Jews are the predominating race,

there being 53.6% of the foreign born group who were born in Russia, Austria and the Balkan Peninsula. Natives of Italy are the next largest group, being represented by 38%, leaving only 8.2% who are natives of other countries.

The percentage of native born children of native parents is very small, being only 15.8% of the grand total. This percentage is very much different from the percentage of native born of native parents which was obtained from the docket book for the total 9,019 cases brought into the Children's Court during the year 1913. These statistics, which are published in the 1913 report of the court, show that the 45% brought into the court are native born of native parents. There are two explanations for this discrepancy; the *first* one is that there is a very large error in the statistics which were compiled from the docket book of the court. The report records the nativity of the parent as that which the parent himself gave, and fails to take into account the marked tendency among foreign born parents who have attained a certain proficiency in the English language to state that they are native born. The statistics obtained from the probation records are much more accurate, because they are the result of very careful investigations by the probation officers who are almost always able to obtain accurate information as to the nativity of the parents of the children. The *second* explanation for the discrepancy lies in the fact that the more trivial offenses for which children are brought into the court are often committed by native born children of native parents and are disposed of summarily by a discharge or suspended sentence. As a result a smaller percentage of the total children of native born parents brought into the court are placed on probation than either of the other two groups.

As the natives of Russia, Austria and the Balkan Peninsula are almost exclusively Hebrew, as those from Italy and Ireland are almost exclusively Roman Catholic, that provision of the law which says that "children shall be placed on probation preferably with officers of their own religious faith" works to put the greater part of the work of probation on the Roman Catholic and Hebrew probation officers.

These figures of the nativity of children are perhaps as good

a measure of the nativity distribution of delinquent children as can be obtained from any source in the city; they show conclusively that the problem of the children of parents recently immigrated is a very serious one for the city to deal with. The very fact that 57% of the children are native born of foreign parents shows that in the new environment the foreign parent has a difficult problem in keeping under control the children brought up in American schools and American ways.

In the case of Hebrews and Italians there must be added the fact that often the penny-grasping parents are prone to sacrifice the welfare of their children to their desire for getting on in the economic world. The probation officers find this a very real difficulty when they endeavor to induce the parents to move out of a neighborhood for the welfare of their children when it is to their material advantage to remain in the neighborhood.

There are also many pitiable instances of dire poverty making it necessary for the mother and father to neglect their children in order to make sufficient means to maintain a bare existence.

The following table gives a detailed analysis of the nativity of the probationers whose records were studied:

TABLE IV.

NATIVITY OF PROBATIONERS.

	Number	Per cent
Native born—Native parents	237	100.0
Native born—Foreign Parents:		
(1) England, Scotland and Wales	26	3.0
(2) Ireland	192	23.0
(3) Germany	86	10.1
(4) Scandinavian Countries	11	1.3
(5) Italy	267	31.5
(6) Russia	137	16.1
(7) Austria	112	13.2
(8) Balkan Peninsula	4	.4
(9) All others	12	1.4
Total—Native born—Foreign parents	847	100.0

Foreign born—Foreign Parents:		
(1) England, Scotland and Wales	3	.7
(2) Ireland	6	1.5
(3) Germany	10	2.5
(4) Scandinavian Countries	3	.7
(5) Italy	154	38.0
(6) Russia	138	34.0
(7) Austria	71	17.6
(8) Balkan Peninsula	8	2.0
(9) All others	12	3.0
Total—Foreign born—Foreign parents	405	100.0
Native born—Native parents	237	15.8
Native born—Foreign parents	847	57.0
Foreign born—Foreign parents	405	27.2
Total	1489	100.0
Not stated	47	
Total	1536	

SCHOOL AND EMPLOYMENT RECORD.

Of the 1,376 children whose school and employment records were given on the investigation blanks 75.5% were enrolled in the regular classes; 14.2% had received their working papers; 6.1% were enrolled in special and ungraded classes. This table appears to show that the methods used in the New York Public Schools for the classification of children in the various grades and special and ungraded classes need careful attention and study. From the information given on the investigation blanks it is quite clear that in many of the cases these boys should have been given special attention in special classes by the school authorities.

When a child is on the road to chronic delinquency it would seem that the schools would as a rule be the first to note this ten-

dency and to make provisions for its correction. This has apparently very seldom been done; the child is allowed to plod along from year to year in the regular grade, to go and come as he pleases, remaining out of school thirty days or longer without the attendance officer exercising any effort whatsoever to return him to school, until he finally commits an offense that brings him to the attention of the court. The probation officer is then asked to investigate the case and to correct serious tendencies in the child's development which should have been arrested by the teacher and principal and attendance officer long before it was necessary for the child to be brought to the court. There are hundreds of records in the Children's Court which show the most flagrant violation of the compulsory education law, where nothing effective has been done by the schools to enforce the regular attendance of the children.

After the child has been placed on probation the probation officers enforce regular school attendance. Why can it not be done before the child is brought to court? Some probation officers will go so far as to say that two-thirds of the cases which th y receive might never have been brought into the court had the children been forced to attend school regularly and had they been given the proper attention in the way of placing them in proper grades, in special classes if necessary, and enlisting their interests in kinds of work that would appeal to them and be useful for their development.

The following table gives the classification of children in the regular, ungraded, special classes, etc.:

TABLE V.

SCHOOL AND WORKING PAPERS CLASSIFICATION.

	Number	Per cent
Regular classes	1039	75.5
Special classes	77	5.6
Ungraded classes	12	.9
Grade not given	13	.9
Working papers	195	14.2
Graduated from public or parochial school	11	.8
Others not in school	29	2.1
Total	1376	100.0
Not stated	160	
Grand total	1536	

Of the children who are enrolled in the regular classes at school practically 80% are enrolled in the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades. It is apparent in comparing this with the age statistics that the delinquent children are considerably retarded in their progress in school.

The following table shows the distribution by grades of children enrolled in the regular classes in the Public Schools:

TABLE VI.

Distribution of Children in Regular Classes.

Grade	No. cases	Number	Per cent
1 a—	5	12	.9
1 b—	7		
2 a—	23	61	5.8
2 b—	38		
3 a—	55	122	11.5
3 b—	67		
4 a—	86	220	21.3
4 b—	134		
5 a—	125	259	25.1
5 b—	134		
6 a—	112	226	21.8
6 b—	114		
7 a—	55	87	8.5
7 b—	32		
8 a—	33	41	4.0
8 b—	8		
High School		11	1.1
Total		1039	100.0

Retardation in School Among Delinquents.

In comparing the statistics showing the ages of children on probation with the table showing their distribution in the grades in school it was apparent that there was a very large percentage of retardation among delinquent children enrolled in Public Schools. A study was consequently made to ascertain the percentage of retardation among the 1,028 children who were enrolled in the regular classes. The table on the following page gives the age grade statistics for these children. It will be noted that of the total number 47.3% are retarded in their school progress; that is they are in classes lower than those of normal children of their same age: 41.1% are normally enrolled; the percentage of accelerated or under-age children is 8.6%. As the standard of normal classification for this table that employed by the New York Public Schools in their studies of retardation and acceleration has been used.

TABLE VII.

Age-Grade Statistics.

Years	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	
7	1	4	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	
8	3	9	6	1	.....	.....	.....	.....	
9	5	13	20	14	.....	.....	Accelerated or under-age		
10	.....	20	30	26	16	3			
11	.....	8	18	42	40	13	5	1	
12	1	1	23	64	65	53	7	2	
13	Retarded or over-age	2	14	39	67	70	32	16	
14		2	6	22	44	53	28	13	
15	2	2	5	12	27	34	15	9	Normal
Total	12	61	122	220	259	226	87	41	

Grand Total—1028.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	Totals	Per cent
Under-age	0	4	6	15	16	16	12	19	88	8.6
Normal	4	22	50	68	105	123	60	22	454	44.1
Over-age	8	35	66	137	138	87	15	0	486	47.3
Total									1028	100.0

A careful study of the Age-Grade Table will show that this 47% of retardation instead of exaggerating the number of over-age or backward children really understates the percentage of retardation among the probationers. As the court handles children only up to the age of 16 years the retarded children in the

upper grades, the 6th, 7th and 8th, are not included in this group.

It will be noticed that in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades that there are children enrolled who are retarded as much as 5, 6 and 7 years. The 16-year limit of our statistics makes it possible for us to have the facts regarding only the normal and accelerated children in the 8th grade; the normal, accelerated and those retarded for one year, in the 7th grade; and the normal, accelerated and those retarded for two years in the 6th grade, and so on. In the Retardation Statistics of the Board of Education it is shown that the percentage of retardation is highest in the 7th and 8th grades.

In view of the above facts an index of retardation more near the truth will be found in the percentage of retardation among children enrolled in the grades below the 6th. The following summary table shows that the percentage of over-age in these grades reaches the very large figure of 57%.

TABLE VIII.

RETARDATION BELOW 6TH GRADE.

	1st Grade	2nd Grade	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	Total	Per Cent
Under-age	0	4	6	15	16	41	6.0
Normal	4	22	50	68	105	249	37.0
Over-age	8	35	66	137	138	384	57.0
Total						674	100.0

The 1913 report for the Department of Education of the City Superintendent of Schools to the Board of Education shows that the percentage of over-age among all school children in Manhattan and the Bronx is 25.5%. Comparing this figure with the backwardness among probationers it appears that one of the characteristics of delinquent children which differentiates them from the normal children is that there is a much greater percentage of retardation in their school progress.

Theorists trying to prove that mental defectiveness is the

cause of all delinquency might use these figures to show that the appalling percentage of retardation is due to the fact that delinquent children are mentally deficient. A thorough study of the causes of backwardness would probably reveal the fact that there are many other things which contribute to retardation.

From study of the probation records it appears that the principal cause of retardation is chronic truancy. Habitual truancy is not only a chief cause of their retardation in school, but in many instances to it is due the fact of their getting into trouble of sufficiently serious nature to bring them into the court at all. A further explanation lies probably in the fact of the school not recognizing the importance of putting children at a kind of work that appeals to them and that will make for their best development. This latter of course involves the whole question of special classes, vocational training, etc. A third explanation will probably be found in the fact that some of the children are actually mentally deficient and need mental examination and proper care. Of course home surroundings and all the environmental conditions affecting the child contribute to his backwardness in school. It is a big problem which is not going to be solved by mental and physical examination alone or by the use of special classes or the proper enforcement of the Compulsory Education Law alone. All of these and many other forces must work in co-operation.

RELIGION OF PROBATIONERS.

A study of the religion of probationers reveals the fact that the predominant religion of children on probation is Roman Catholic. Approximately 58% of the 1,491 of those whose religion were given on the records were of that faith. The Hebrew religion is represented by 30%, and the Protestant by 12%. This table is of some value in the selection of the proportion of the Roman Catholic, Hebrew and Protestant officers for the care of the children:

TABLE IX.

RELIGION OF PROBATIONERS.

	Number	Per cent
Roman Catholic	869	58.2
Protestant	184	12.3
Hebrew	438	29.5
Total	1491	100.0
Not stated	45	
Total	1536	

SHOWING NUMBER OF CHILDREN EACH JUDGE PLACED ON PROBATION AND NUMBER HE DISCHARGED.

Friday afternoon of each week is reserved by the court for what is known as Probation Day. At this time the Judge hears reports from the officers on children who are on probation and discharges the child from further supervision or extends his period of probation, as the facts may warrant. I had observed, previous to making this study, the different Judges making dispositions in this probation court, and thought it would be interesting to study proportion of discharges from supervision by the different Judges. In the following table it will be noted that of the cases studied 65.3% were placed on probation by Judge Hoyt, while only 44.6% of the same number were discharged by him. Judge Mayo placed 32.5% of the number on probation and discharged 53.7%. It appears therefore that Judge Hoyt extends the period of probation in more cases than Judge Mayo does.

TABLE X.

SHOWING NUMBER OF CHILDREN EACH JUDGE PLACED ON PROBATION AND NUMBER HE DISCHARGED.

	Placed on Probation		Discharged	
Judge	Number	Per cent	Number	Per cent
Hoyt	995	65.3	653	44.6
Mayo	495	32.5	786	53.7
All others	33	2.2	25	1.7
Total	1523	100.0	1464	100.0
Not stated	13		72	
Total	1536		1536	

RESIDENTIAL DISTRIBUTION.

The accompanying map of the City of New York shows the residential distribution of children placed under the supervision of probation officers. These districts were made so that their boundaries coincide with the boundaries of the census districts. By far the largest number of children in any one district is found in the first district, which is the lower east side.

There is a movement under way to allow the probation officers to receive their probationers at the offices of the various District Superintendents of Schools in various sections of the city, instead of having children come to the Children's Court from all parts of the city to report. In their efforts to bring this about, the probation officers and those interested in the probation work of the court hope to make it possible for the probationers to report to the officers without the expense of carfare, to keep them away from the atmosphere of the court as much as possible, and to make it easy for the probation officer to become acquainted with the peculiar conditions of the neighborhood in which most of his probationers reside. It is hoped that this map will be of service in the selection of the District Superintendents' offices to be used for this purpose.

TABLE XI.

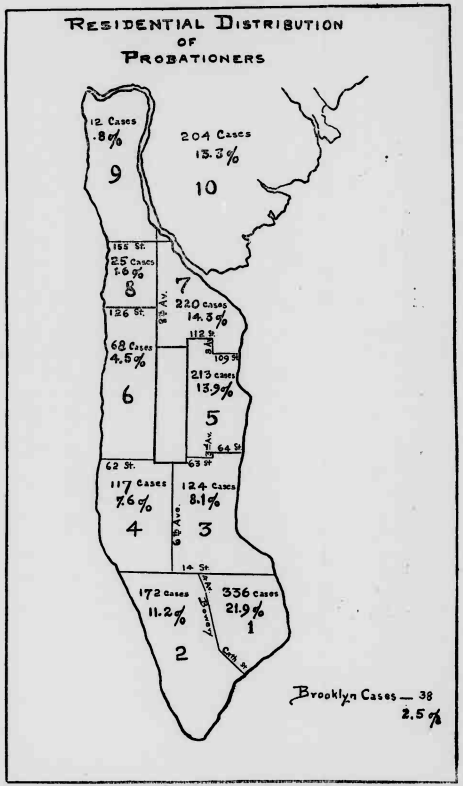

TABLE XII.

RESIDENCE DISTRICTS OF DELINQUENTS ON PROBATION.

District	Number	Per cent
1	336	21.9
2	172	11.2
3	124	8.1
4	117	7.6
5	213	13.9
6	68	4.5
7	220	14.3
8	25	1.6
9	12	.8
10	204	13.3
Brooklyn	38	2.5
All others	4	.3
Total	1533	100.0
Not stated	3	
Total	1536	

NOTE.—The following are the approximate boundaries of the districts of Table XII:

I. Below 14th St., East of 4th Ave., Bowery and Catharine St.
II. Below 14th St., West of 4th Ave., Bowery and Catharine St.
III. East of 6th Ave., from 14th St. to 63rd St.
IV. West of 6th Ave., between 14th St. and 62nd St.
V. East of 5th Ave., from 63rd St. to 109th St.
VI. West of Central Park and 8th Ave., from 62nd St. to 126th St.
VII. In Manhattan East of 8th Ave., North of 109th St.
VIII. West of 8th Ave., between 126th St. and 155th St.
IX. West of 8th Ave. and Harlem River North of 155th St.
X. All of the Bronx.

PART II.—PROBATIONARY TREATMENT.

As has been stated in the first paragraph of this report an effort has been made to show in as clear a way as possible the pertinent facts about the probationers and their treatment by the probation officers. The preceding pages have dealt exclusively

with the facts concerning the probationers; it is now our task to put in as clear and concise a way as possible the results of a study of the probationary treatment administered to these children by the paid probation officers of the court. The chronological history blanks upon which are recorded all of the pertinent facts relating to the history of a case, from the time the child was placed on probation until he was released from oversight, furnish a very good means for getting a measure of the work done by the officers with their charges. Upon these chronological sheets are kept records of all reports of probationers, calls at the homes of their charges by the officers, and record of all other work done on the case. In my effort to check up the work of the officers I have gathered those figures which appear to be the best index of probation work, and in the following pages I have endeavored to give them such interpretation as the facts seem to warrant.

Reports by Probationers.

Each probation officer reserves one afternoon a week for the reception of his charges who report to him at the probation office. During the school months the school children report after the afternoon session of school. In cases of boys who have their working papers the probation officers receive them at the office of the chief probation officer of the Court of Special Sessions in the Ashland Building, 4th Avenue and 24th Street, between the hours of 6 and 8 in the evening. This is done in order to obviate the possibility of loss of position by the boys by remaining away from work to report to the probation officer.

In the chronological histories are recorded all of the dates upon which the probationer reported to the officer, as well as the pertinent facts concerning the probationer's progress which were brought out at this meeting. In studying the records at the probation office the number of reports made by each probationer to his officer was carefully counted and recorded. The following table gives the number of cases in which no reports, one report, two, three, four, etc., were made by the probationers.

TABLE XIII.

Reports by Probationers.

Number of Reports	No. Cases	Per cent
No reports	230	15.1
1	205	13.4
2	188	12.3
3	153	10.0
4	144	9.4
5	121	7.9
6	106	7.0
7	93	6.1
8	66	4.3
9	42	2.8
10	40	2.6
11	41	2.7
12	24	1.6
Over 12	72	4.8
Total	1525	100.0
No record	11	
Total	1536	

It will be noted that in 15% of the cases no reports were made to the officer by the probationer. Some of these were exceptional cases where it did not seem advisable for the probation officer to require the child to come to the court to report. There are many reasons for this action on the part of the officers; the child may have been too small to be trusted to come from a long distance uptown down to the court without someone accompanying him, the parents may both have been working and there may have been no one to come with him, in other cases the good judgment of the probation officer has justified him in not requiring the child to report. In some of the cases, however, these reasons did not exist.

By far the larger percentage of the number of reports in individual cases is six or under, and the average number of reports is 4.4. Some of the chronological histories are intensely interesting as showing the development of the cases through the various stages, particularly when the child has been on probation for a long period. Where from 10 to 12 reports have been made by probationers there is the assurance that a great deal of work has been done by the officers for the regeneration of the child in his charge. The very large percentage of the records where only a few reports are recorded are discouraging in comparison with the splendid work that is done with other individual cases where the probation officer has really got under the surface and done constructive work. One is inclined to wonder if there is any value in the work done on the case whose chronological history reads something like the following: "April 6th. Probationer reported. Is doing well. School record O. K.," followed by about four more records of such reports stating practically the same thing, the one difference being a new date given. The monotony of this report is sometimes varied by a statement something like this: "April 30th. Visited home. Found conditions not much improved," and then a summary statement of period of probation for the edification of the Judge which reads something like this: "Probationer has reported satisfactorily and has fulfilled the requirements of his probation. I would respectfully recommend his discharge." A report of this kind is an index of a serious lack of imagination and initiative on the part of the probation officer and it is a question as to whether the probation officer has really accomplished anything at all with his probationer and if the child would not have been practically as well off had there been no time at all spent on him by the probation officer.

The matter of the length of probation periods will be taken up later, but it must be mentioned here that in a large majority of the cases the probation officer gets only time enough to simply scratch the surface of the case and do a bit of perfunctory work by having his charge report to him and in visiting the home a few times.

Probation work is growing by leaps and bounds and here

appears to be one of the most fruitful fields for its future development, and from time to time attention must be given to the checking up of just this kind of work done by the probation officer.

Calls by Officers at Homes.

Information that is in any way an indication of the amount of work done by the officer at the home of the probationer is of value in judging the efficiency of the work with the probationer. In working over the records at the probation office the number of calls the officers made at the homes of their charges were carefully tabulated, and the result is shown in the following table:

TABLE XIV.

Calls by Officers at Homes of Children.

Number of calls	No. cases	Per cent
None	77	5.1
1	181	11.9
2	279	18.3
3	215	14.1
4	184	12.2
5	127	8.3
6	99	6.5
7	77	5.1
8	55	3.6
9	47	3.2
10	47	3.2
Over 10	140	8.5
Total	1528	100.0
Not stated	8	
Total	1536	

The largest single percentage is in cases where only two visits were made at the home; in some cases no visits were made

at all; in 70% of the cases there were not more than five visits made at the homes of the probationers. In studying the records I found many cases where a very large number of visits had been made and where the probation officers had exhausted all the possibilities for helping to straighten out the irregularities in the child's life. These latter cases are examples of the kind of probation work that should be striven for in all cases. The fact that in 70% of the cases not more than five visits were made to the homes of the children is as pertinent as an index of what is, as are these better handled cases indices of what should be. If the child's delinquency is serious enough to need the attention of the probation officer it is serious enough to require more than three or four visits at the home by the officer and an occasional report to the officer at the court. It is not my desire in pointing out these facts to criticise in any way the work of the officers; there are many things that enter in to keep the officer from doing all that could be done in the way of constructive probation work. No one is more aware of the shortcomings than the officers themselves, nor is it always their fault that a larger number of visits are not made. The probation periods are uniformly too short to allow them to do much more than they are doing, and some of them are burdened with more cases than they can look after successfully. The officers are also required to do too much clerical work.

Visits of Officers at School, With Employers, Etc.

In our work with the records careful count was also made of the number of times the officers visited the schools in all cases of children attending school, or employers in cases of boys who had their working papers. The accompanying table gives the result of this count and shows that in practically 50% of the cases the school or the employer was not visited at all, and in 30% of the cases only one or two visits were made. Comment on the figures is unnecessary as they speak very well for themselves.

TABLE XV.

Visits of Officers at School, With Employers, Etc.

Number of visits	Number	Per cent
None	762	49.5
1	291	19.0
2	167	10.9
3	119	7.7
4	69	4.5
5	38	2.5
Over 5	90	5.9
Total	1536	100.0

Other Meetings With Probationers and Parents.

In order to make the investigation of the work done with probationers as complete as possible, effort was made to tabulate very carefully under one heading or another all of the work done on each individual case. For the sake of completeness, information for the following table, showing the number of times the probation officer had meetings with the probationer or his parents other than those previously accounted for, was collected; it shows that only in a very few instances were such meetings recorded and that these meetings may be considered as of very minor importance in our judgment of the work done with the probationers.

TABLE XVI.

OTHER MEETINGS WITH PROBATIONERS AND PARENTS.

Number of meetings	Number	Per cent
None	1063	69.4
1	230	15.0
2	127	8.3
3	48	3.0
4	20	1.3
5	21	1.3
Over 5	27	1.7
Total	1536	100.0

CO-OPERATION.

It is generally considered that one of the most important functions of the probation officer is that of bringing all the forces for good, available, to bear upon the children whom he has in his charge. In going over each individual chronological history great care was taken to make note of all of the co-operating agencies who were enlisted by the probation officers to help them in their work with the boys. A surprisingly large percentage, as the table will show, are cases in which no co-operation was sought; the total number being 1,125 or slightly over 73%. The following table gives the facts of the number of cases where co-operation was sought and where it was not.

TABLE XVII.

	Number	Per cent
Cases in which co-operation was sought	411	26.8
Cases in which co-operation was not sought	1125	73.2
Total	1536	100.0

In our investigation care was taken not only to ascertain the number of cases in which co-operation was sought, but also to carefully tabulate the various organizations whose help had been enlisted. The Big Brother Association was the most frequent co-operating agency, the school was next, the relief societies, and the church followed in importance in the order named. In some of the cases the probation officer had fairly moved heaven and earth to bring about a change in the life of the child and to help the family on to their feet. They were most striking instances of efficient and capable social work, but the majority of the cases were discouraging in this line because of the lack of resourcefulness on the part of the officer in getting at a solution and bringing the neighborhood associations into line. The organizations available for assistance in the work of this kind may be classed as good, bad, and indifferent. I think a large percentage of them would come under the last classification, and sometimes the probation officers are justified in becoming discouraged in seeking aid because of the half-hearted way in which it is often given. Many of the organizations of considerable reputation could study the problem of co-operation with the probation officers to considerable advantage in making themselves more useful to the community.

TABLE XVIII.

CO-OPERATION.

	Number
Big Brothers	149
Church	56
Clinic	38
Employer	23
No Co-operation	1125
Relief Societies	58
Social Agencies	33
School	139
Total	1621*

* In most of the 411 cases in Table XVII co-operation was sought from several agencies in many cases, which accounts for the total in Table XVIII.

Length of Probation Period.

One of the most important needs is the lengthening of the probation period. The 1913 Children's Court Report has a table showing the length of probation period of all cases of children who were dismissed from supervision during the year. More than 25% of the 2,049 cases were for periods of two months or less, and more than 80% were for periods of less than six months in duration. It is the opinion of experts that proper probationary treatment can be given only when the officer has the child in his charge for a sufficient length of time to allow him to do really constructive work with the child so that there may be a lasting influence left in his life. If the child does not require a probationary period of nine months or a year, or even more, then it would hardly seem of sufficient importance as a rule to have the probation officer spend his time with the case.

In the figures which have gone before it is apparent that in many of the cases rather perfunctory work has been done with the probationers, that is, the sole amount of probationary treatment has consisted in four or five reports by the probationer and two or three visits by the officer at his charge's home. It is obvious that in a probationary period of two or three months that not a great deal more can be expected of an officer who has some fifty boys under his care besides doing considerable investigation work.

The records show that in many cases where the probation period is longer than six months that a great deal of constructive probation work has been done. A comparison of the work done on cases which have had a short duration and those which have had a longer period of duration is ample justification for the extension of the periods. The probation officers' work in these cases of longer duration shows in most cases an initiative and zealousness which would hardly be expected to exist did one form his judgment of the work from an inspection of the work done on cases of short duration.

In a proper adjustment of the length of probation periods the Judges would probably not put under supervision some few of the more trivial cases that are now placed in charge of the

officers. The general lengthening of the probation periods, even after the elimination of the few more trivial cases which the probation officers receive, would necessitate the appointment of additional Catholic and Hebrew officers. That the amount of work done on probation cases and that the length of probation period bears a definite relationship to the number of cases on probation was evident in my observations of the individual cases of the Protestant probation officers as compared with the cases of the Catholic and Hebrew officers. There are comparatively small numbers of Protestant children placed on probation and the probation officers of that faith have a smaller number of cases in their charge and have them on probation for a longer period. The cases handled by the Protestant officers show evidences of much more constructive probation work and much closer supervision. This is not due in any sense to the fact that in general the Protestant probation officers are more conscientious than the officers of the other faiths, but they have more time at their disposal to do what they feel is necessary in the proper treatment of their probationers and in general they have the children on probation for a longer period. In my work at the court I often had occasion to speak with the officers of the different faiths on this subject; they feel their limitations and if they have fewer cases under their supervision and had that number for a longer period of probation they are certain that better treatment could be administered.

The general experience is that intensive work should be done with the probationer at the start, to get matters rightly adjusted for correcting the delinquent tendencies. After conditions have been placed on a normal plane, through the efforts of the probation officer, it would of course be unfortunate if supervision were carried to the extent of harassing the boy. Nevertheless after a condition has been corrected and maintained in the corrected form for a few weeks there is no guarantee that it will stay corrected after trial of so short a period. No one is more keenly alive to this fact than the probation officers themselves and it very often happens that after a child has been discharged from supervision that they require him to report unofficially to them

so that they may keep in touch with his progress. The probation period of longer duration in a great many cases would simply mean that the probation officer would keep himself informed from time to time as to the progress of his probationer after he had been once firmly placed on his feet. Supervision under these circumstances should be more or less of a tapering off process. The following table gives the length of probation period for all cases ended during 1913. It is taken from the 1913 Children's Court Report.

TABLE XIX.

DURATION OF PROBATION.

Length of Probation	Male	Female	Total	Per cent
2 Months and under	481	46	527	25.8
3 Months	358	33	391	19.1
4 Months	425	34	459	22.2
5 Months	254	12	266	13.0
6 Months	156	17	173	8.5
7 Months	74	11	85	4.2
8 Months	49	5	54	2.6
9 Months	29	5	34	1.7
10 Months	20	3	23	1.1
11 Months	11	6	17	.8
12 Months and over	18	2	20	1.0
Total	1875	174	2049	100.0

RECORDS.

The records of the probation office are admirable from the standpoint of their accessability and the detail of the information at hand for immediate reference. Even now there are sufficient number of these records to make them a valuable original source for information of scientific value. The investigation blanks and the chronological history sheets are well filled out and carefully filed. There is only one important detail in which the original intentions of the blanks have been overlooked, it is that the

probation officers have neglected to keep a summary statement of dates of visits to the homes and reports by probationers on the front page of the chronological history sheet.

In a carefully supervised probation office with as large a number of officers as are attached to this court as a matter of efficiency it seems unfortunate that this has not been done. By quickly going over the records of the various officers from time to time the head of the department might keep himself accurately informed as to the amount and kind of work being done by various officers with their probationers.

The chief probation officer does not check up his officers in this manner. In fact the probation work in the Children's Court is quite neglected by the chief probation officer of the Court of Special Sessions. He seems to have the false notion that his main duty is with the adult parts of Special Sessions where only about half the number of probation officers are employed. The Deputy Chief Probation Officer likewise pays very little attention to the work of the Children's Court; I met her in this office only two or three times in the course of two months' work there.

One of the probation officers has been assigned to supervise the work of the office of this court. He handles a rather trying situation with considerable ability and a great deal of tact. If the position of Deputy Chief Probation Officer could be created it would help this situation.

CLERICAL WORK.

At present there seems to be considerable duplication of work in the files; a careful study of the system would reveal possibilities of elimination which would work toward economy and efficiency.

At present probation officers are burdened with an unusual amount of clerical work in keeping up their records. This is due to the fact that only two stenographers are detailed to this department. These stenographers have charge of all of the filing and general clerical work of the office. The large number of cases in the court and the exceeding detail of the record system makes it necessary for them to spend most of their time in the details of filing in the office. They have some time, however, at

their disposal to write up the chronological history sheets and investigation records for the probation officers; but they do only a very small portion of this work for the officers. As a result the officers themselves are required to do a very large amount of typewriting and clerical work in order to keep the records of their active cases in proper condition. It takes up valuable time which should be spent in the field making investigations or working to help probationers. Additional stenographic and clerical help is necessary for office efficiency.

The Norm of Probation Work.

The chief value of a report of this kind is to check up the general impressions by facts drawn from the large number of cases to show what the actual conditions are. Our study has revealed that while there are many individual cases of splendid probation work, yet the norm of the work is still far below what is necessary for thorough-going constructive probation work. There is a small percentage of brilliant examples of constructive probation work, but the bulk of the probationers still receive more or less perfunctory treatment, and it is the business of those interested in the progress of the work to strive earnestly to bring the work with the majority of the cases up to the standard of that done with the small percentage of cases where the officers have shown initiative and constructive imagination coupled with unflagging interest.

I believe that the probation officers themselves will be the persons most interested in seeing this careful tabulation of statistics regarding the number of visits they make to their probationers and other work done with their charges; such a disinterested and unbiased study will be welcomed by them as showing the measure of their present work. It will make it possible for them to contrast their present work with the ideals which they hold before themselves. Most of the officers have been in this new work for a little more than two years. They have made such splendid progress in this time and have solved successfully so many difficult problems of probation that if they are given the opportunity, with longer probation periods and fewer probationers and less clerical work, they will gladly seize upon it for the further perfection of their work in the rehabilitation of their delinquent charges.

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